



HELSINKI COMMISSION HEARING

UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON
SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

Testimony :: Hon. Ben Nighthorse Campbell

Co-Chairman - Helsinki Commission

I am very pleased that the U.S. Helsinki Commission, which I co-chair, is holding today's hearing focused on anti-Semitism in the OSCE region. Since the Spring of 2002, when we observed a spike in anti-Semitic violence in the region, Members of the Helsinki Commission have provided important leadership which has led to concrete action. In May of that year, the Helsinki Commission held a congressional hearing to highlight the alarming trend and to discuss strategies to combat the problem.

Following, in response to the depredations, last summer I introduced S.Con.Res. 7, a resolution highlighting the "expressions of anti-Semitism experienced throughout the [OSCE] region" that "included physical assaults, with some instances involving weapons or stones, arson of synagogues, and desecration of Jewish cultural sites, such as cemeteries and statues." It passed unanimously, sending a resounding message that the Congress will not stand silent in the face of violence against Jews and Jewish institutions.

Last month I introduced S.Con.Res 110, aimed at providing impetus for further action following up on the success of the Berlin OSCE Conference on Anti-Semitism held in April. The measure highlights the accomplishments of the Berlin Declaration, especially the statement that "international developments or political issues, including those in Israel or elsewhere in the Middle East, never justify anti-Semitism," while furthering the commitment of participating States to monitor anti-Semitic crimes and hate crimes.

The Berlin Conference was a success, in part because of the high level participation of many delegations. In this regard, I appreciate the personal participation of Secretary of State Colin L. Powell at the Berlin Conference. Many of the other accomplishments from the meeting are also a result of the good work of the State Department and Stephan M. Minikes, the U.S. Ambassador to the OSCE.

One proposal emerging from the Berlin Conference worth highlighting is the possible appointment by the Bulgarian OSCE Chair-in-Office, in consultation with the incoming Slovenian chairman, of a special high-level envoy to ensure that the commitments from the Maastricht OSCE Ministerial meeting and the Berlin Conference are implemented by the 55 participating States. There is much to be done, and having a personal envoy of the Chair-in-

Office would help see these commitments are honored and fulfilled

There is also a need to follow up on the offer of the Government of Spain to organize and hold the next OSCE Conference on Anti-Semitism in Cordoba, Spain, in the event the Sofia OSCE Ministerial Council decides to hold another conference on anti-Semitism. The Spanish offer would help ensure sustained attention to anti-Semitism in the OSCE region.

Meanwhile, the United States should urge OSCE participating States to support the Declaration of the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust of January 2000, and the work of the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research, in developing effective methodologies to teach the lessons of the Holocaust. If we are to turn the tide of growing anti-Semitism, education is essential. The Task Force and the ongoing work of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum deserve our continued support.

We have accomplished much over the past two years to confront and combat anti-Semitism in the OSCE region. As Secretary Powell stressed in his address to the Berlin Conference, "We must send the clear message far and wide that anti-Semitism is always wrong and it is always dangerous. We must send the clear message that anti-Semitic hate crimes are exactly that: crimes, and that these crimes will be aggressively prosecuted." The Helsinki Commission will continue to build upon the work begun in Berlin with the aim of eradicating anti-Semitism and related violence at home and abroad.